

to advance that legislation yesterday. My colleagues and I are proud to stand with the American people on this subject for the safety of American families and the health and security of our communities, but this time—this time—Democrats have rejected that reasonable request. They have refused to meet President Trump half way and provide even one-fifth of the resources for the border they were willing to provide just a few months ago.

There is no bright line of principle that separates hundreds of miles of physical barriers in 2006 from new physical barriers in 2018. There is no major philosophical shift that made \$25 billion for border security worthwhile just a few months ago but makes a far more modest investment of \$5 billion immoral and unacceptable today.

No, Democrats haven't rejected the President's request and invited this partial government shutdown because of some principled objections they just discovered in the last few weeks. It is not some principled discovery they just made in the last few weeks. They brought this about because they are under a lot of pressure—we all know this—from their far left and feel compelled to disagree with the President on almost anything and certainly this.

So that is where we are, but we don't need to be here for long. In order to get us out of this mess, a negotiated solution will need to check these boxes. It is really very simple. It will need the support of 60 Senators, which will obviously include a number of Democrats. It will need to pass the House. And it will need a Presidential signature. That is how we make a law in this situation. Sixty 60 votes in the Senate, a majority of the House, and President Trump's signature are what is needed. That is what will end this regrettable episode, reopen the lapsed portions of the Federal Government, and produce the investment in border security that our Nation really needs.

So I am glad that productive discussions are continuing at this hour between my friend the Democratic leader, the Democratic leader in the House, and the White House. When those negotiations produce a solution that is acceptable to all of those parties, it will receive a vote here on the Senate floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CHILD PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2017—Continued

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 695, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

House Message to accompany H.R. 695, a bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a voluntary national

criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McConnell motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Merry Christmas, happy holidays to you, sir, and to the legislative staff.

I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be dispensed with.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, at midnight last night, roughly 25 percent of the government shut down because of one person and one person alone: President Trump. We arrived at this moment because President Trump has been on a destructive 2-week temper tantrum, demanding the American taxpayer pony up for an expensive and ineffective border wall that the President promised Mexico would pay for.

Make no mistake. The Trump shutdown is not about border security. All of the proposals we have made contain over \$1 billion in new border security money, the same amount allocated last year by both parties and even the President agreed to. The Trump administration has barely even spent any of the border security money from last year. So the Trump shutdown isn't over border security; it is because President Trump is demanding billions of dollars for an expensive, ineffective wall the majority of Americans don't support.

Let me remind you, the President called for a shutdown no less than 25 times. He has wanted one for months. In our meeting in the Oval Office, President Trump said he would be "proud" to shut the government down. Imagine saying he would be proud to shut the government down.

Even Rush Limbaugh, one of the biggest supporters of the President, said it was a Trump shutdown; that he caused it. He said—this is Limbaugh speaking: "The President wants you to know it's money [for the wall] or nothing, and if it's nothing, he shuts it down."

Just 2 days ago, the Senate unanimously agreed to a proposal by Leader MCCONNELL to keep the government open through February. It wasn't exactly what Democrats wanted—we thought it should be longer—but we agreed because we wanted to keep the

government open, and all indications were that the President would sign the bill, but President Trump—beholden to the far, far right, unwilling to shoulder even the slightest critique from Rush Limbaugh or Laura Ingraham—changed his mind on the bipartisan Senate bill, passed unanimously by all Republicans and all Democrats in this Chamber, and he sent his House allies off to tilt at windmills.

Everyone knew yesterday, long before the House vote, that the President's wall lacked 60 votes in the Senate. It has proven to lack even 50 votes. It will never pass the Senate—not today, not next week, not next year.

So President Trump, if you want to open the government, you must abandon the wall, plain and simple. The Senate is not interested in swindling American taxpayers for an unnecessary, ineffective, and wasteful policy. What we do support, Democrats and Republicans, is real, effective border security—but not a wall. The wall is President Trump's bone to the hard-right people. It is no way to spend \$5 billion, for a political bone.

I have heard the President and his allies in the media say Democrats don't support border security. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Democrats have always been for smart and effective ways to secure our border. We are pushing for technology, like drones and sensors and inspection equipment. Every single proposal we made to the President included \$1.3 billion for border security. The Trump shutdown provides zero dollars for border security, but I have never supported a border wall, and I challenge anyone on the hard right to find a time that I—or any expert—has supported a wall like what the President has proposed.

So where do we go from here? Well, three proposals are on the table, two by Democrats—Leader PELOSI and I—one by Leader MCCONNELL, each of which would reopen the government and provide \$1.3 billion in border security. We are also open to discussing any proposals with the President as long as they don't include funding for the wall, but in order for an agreement to be reached, all four congressional leaders must sign off and the President must endorse it and say he will sign it. Leader MCCONNELL must agree. Speaker RYAN must agree. They cannot duck responsibility. Leader MCCONNELL still controls this Chamber. Speaker RYAN controls what reaches the floor of the House. They are essential to this process. Leader MCCONNELL can't duck out of it. He knows that. Of course, Leader PELOSI and I must agree. Most importantly, the President must publicly support and say he will sign an agreement before it gets a vote in either Chamber. We don't want to go through what we went through a few days ago.

Both Leader MCCONNELL and I have agreed on that qualification for a specific reason. Repeatedly, the President

has privately agreed to a deal with congressional leaders, only to reverse himself when criticized by the far right. We can't have another situation when the President signals support at first but then reverses himself, which is precisely what caused this shutdown in the first place.

If Leader MCCONNELL, Speaker RYAN, Leader PELOSI, and I agree on a solution, and the President says he will sign it, we can end the Trump shutdown immediately.

Discussions continue among the members of our staffs. The Republican Leader and I will update the Senate on the status of those talks once progress has been made.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Today, 9 of our 15 Federal Departments and several dozen Agencies have shuttered their doors. By doing that, they denied vital services to millions of American citizens.

Since midnight last night, just a few days before Christmas, more than 800,000 dedicated public servants and their families have been told not to expect their next paycheck for the foreseeable future.

There is one reason and one reason only that our Federal Government has shut down today and countless Americans are living with uncertainty. That reason is President Donald J. Trump. The President is holding the Federal Government hostage for \$5 billion of from the American taxpayer for his unnecessary, ineffective, and expensive wall on the southern border—a wall he repeatedly promised—gave his word to the American taxpayers—that Mexico would pay for. Now he wants American taxpayers to dig in their pockets and pay for it.

The President's irresponsible behavior is astounding. His job, like ours, is to keep the Federal Government operating for the hundreds of millions of Americans who depend on government services every day, from our national parks, to housing services for the elderly, the disabled, our veterans, and for assistance for our Nation's farmers. In fact, 2 days ago, the President signed the farm bill into law and praised his efforts. Today, he precipitated a shutdown that shuttered the doors to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's field offices—the same offices farmers rely on to understand this new law.

But the worst part of all is that this was completely avoidable. We provided the President with several options to avoid this result. It is a case where he cannot take yes for an answer. We offered to pass six full-year appropri-

ations bills and a continuing resolution for Homeland or a continuing resolution for all the remaining bills. Either of these options would have kept the government open. They would have provided more than \$1 billion for border security—the very thing the President says he needs and cares most about. Plus, signing them instead of having a needless shutdown would save taxpayers millions of dollars.

After both of these offers were rejected, the Senate passed by voice vote a 7-week continuing resolution. This would have given us more time to negotiate and avert this catastrophe. Democrats and Republicans came together to pass it. The President had agreed to sign it. We finally had a path forward. Then FOX News and the right-wing media started criticizing it. The President's ego won out over his duties to the country. His ego was so bruised, he reversed course and went back on what he had agreed to.

Here we are exactly where the President wanted us to be—in the middle of a Trump shutdown. For anyone doubting where responsibility lies, let's recall that the President has publicly called for a government shutdown no fewer than 25 times over the past year. Just last week, he declared he would be proud to shut down the government unless we capitulated to his demand. Proud? I have been here with every President, Republican and Democratic, since President Gerald Ford. It is one of the most reckless statements I have ever heard uttered by a President of the United States. And now he has made good on his threat. His pride has won out, and the Trump shutdown has begun. How long is it going to last? Who knows? Yesterday, the President promised it would last a long time, and then he promised us it would be a short shutdown. Even in this, his behavior is erratic.

How did we get here? Is there a legitimate crisis precipitating this shutdown? Is the President playing games with the lives and livelihoods of American citizens to solve some immediate problem that threatens our Nation? No. Of course not. In caving to the most extreme sliver of his base, President Trump is throwing what many of us have described as a childish tantrum because he wants money to fulfill a cynical promise he made repeatedly on the campaign trail—more of a symbolic prize than any sensible policy solution.

This wasteful wall—a wall he promised Mexico would pay for, not the American taxpayers—this wasteful wall that he now wants to bill to the American taxpayers would do more to preserve the President's ego than it would to protect the American people. But I believe it is the natural result of the President's years-long demonization and vilification of immigrants, years during which the President rallied his base with falsehoods and fantasies where vulnerable women and children are portrayed as hordes of gang members and terrorists invading

our country. The sad reality, as Republicans and Democrats know, is that many of these people coming to our country are fleeing desperate situations in their home countries, and they are looking for sanctuary. They are not coming here to perpetuate violence; they are running from it.

Let me be clear. There is no crisis that requires us to build a 30-foot wall between us and our neighbors to the south. The President's hateful rhetoric about a crisis on our southern border does not reflect reality.

At the end of 2017, arrests of people attempting to enter the United States illegally dropped to historic lows. Between 2000 and 2018, border apprehensions fell sharply from 1.6 million in fiscal year 2000 to approximately 400,000 in fiscal year 2018. That is a 75-percent drop. Not only do the facts on the ground not warrant spending billions of American taxpayer dollars on a "big beautiful wall," as the President likes to call it, that is not who we are as a nation. We are a country founded by immigrants, just as my maternal grandparents came to Vermont from Italy, my paternal great-grandparents came to Vermont from Ireland, and my wife's parents came to Vermont from the Province of Quebec in Canada. We need to look at the immigrant founding of our country. Then, if we want to wall ourselves off from our neighbors, it will not only be an expensive waste of Americans' taxpayer dollars, but it will be immoral, ineffective, and an affront to everything this country is supposed to stand for.

To build a wall, the President wants to seize land from ranchers and farmers in Texas and in other border States—seize lands that have been in their families for generations. He would need to construct walls through wildlife refuges and nature preserves, basically destroying them. Ironically, we would end up walling ourselves off from the Rio Grande in the process, essentially ceding the river to Mexico.

After all of that and after billions of wasted taxpayer dollars, what would it accomplish? Would it stop people from fleeing violence in their home countries and seeking sanctuary? No. Would it stop drug smugglers and human traffickers from engaging in illegal activity? Definitely no. As so many have said, show me a 30-foot wall, and I will show you a 31-foot ladder or a tunnel.

To address these complex issues, we need real solutions, not bumper sticker slogans, not angry tweets. Everyone agrees we need to keep our borders safe and secure, but it has to be with smart border security, with border security that works, with new technologies that have proven to have worked on the border and at our ports of entry, technologies with new air and marine assets and additional personnel who are needed.

A 30-foot wall is symbolic and unneeded. Even if we needed to build it, what is the rush? Over the past 2 years, Congress has provided nearly \$1.7 billion to build or to replace fencing on

the southern border. Yet the administration has hardly spent any of that money, and the projects it has undertaken have been handled in such a way that they have ballooned in cost. We have given the administration \$1.7 billion, and it is now demanding more. How much of the \$1.7 billion did it spend? It spent 6 percent. Six percent of these funds have been spent. We have recently learned that one project in the Rio Grande Valley that was supposed to cost \$445 million will now cost American taxpayers nearly \$787 million. That is a 77-percent cost overrun with a pricetag of \$31.5 million for each and every mile.

We have seen that you cannot trust the administration to be responsible with the money we have already provided, let alone trust it to spend responsibly the additional money the President is demanding. Once and for all, let's put an end to this nonsense, and we have an easy way to do it.

We could finish six of the seven appropriations bills right now while we continue to debate these other issues. These bills are the product of bipartisan compromise as the Republicans and Democrats have come together. They provide billions of dollars in new resources to address critical needs for the American people. They protect U.S. national security. These six bills that we have already agreed on—Republicans and Democrats—would provide much needed funding to help combat our Nation's opioid epidemic and critical investments in infrastructure. They would help us to rebuild our Nation's crumbling roads, bridges, and highways. They would provide resources to protect the environment and help ensure that the water we drink and the air we breathe is safe and clean for this generation, for our children, and for the following generation. They would also support key allies and national security programs to enable the United States to be a global leader—a role that is being increasingly challenged by China and Russia.

So I have to ask; is the President really going to hold the American people hostage over a wall that he, time and again, has promised Mexico will pay for? Is he really going to force hundreds of thousands of Federal employees, including the very Agency he depends upon to carry out his immigration enforcement policy, to work without pay over the Christmas holiday? Is he really going to tell millions of Americans, including his most ardent supporters, that he could care less whether they are cut off from critical government services purely in the service of his own vanity?

The President has, apparently, decided that fighting a symbolic fight for a shiny object is more important than keeping our government running for the American people. It is the height of irresponsibility.

As negotiations with Chairman SHELBY and Leader MCCONNELL continue in good faith, I am here this

weekend to continue to talk with Members of both parties, but we are all coming to the same conclusion. We can agree easily, Republicans and Democrats, but we can only succeed if the President decides to do what we have done, which is to put the country first. The President of the United States owes that to the American people. He owes reality, not rhetoric.

I don't see another Member seeking recognition.

I ask unanimous consent that the editorial in yesterday's New York Times about Secretary Mattis be placed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Dec. 20, 2018]

JIM MATTIS WAS RIGHT—WHO WILL PROTECT AMERICA NOW?

(By the Editorial Board)

The editorial board represents the opinions of the board, its editor and the publisher. It is separate from the newsroom and the Op-Ed section.

Jim Mattis is stepping down as defense secretary, a day after President Trump overruled him and other top national security advisers by ordering the rapid withdrawal of all 2,000 American ground troops from Syria. Mr. Mattis, a retired four-star general, said in his letter of resignation that his views on a number of foreign policy and defense matters were fundamentally at odds with those of the president.

Mr. Mattis did not specifically mention the president's seemingly impulsive decision on Syria, but he and other top aides were clearly caught by surprise. With Mr. Mattis's departure, the last of the original group of grounded professionals who have, with at least partial success, restrained Mr. Trump on foreign and defense policy are now gone.

It was less than three months ago that John Bolton, the national security adviser, spelled out a broader mission for the American troops in Syria.

At the time, it sounded like an authoritative statement of official policy. Only, as is so often the case with Donald Trump's chaotic presidency, it apparently wasn't.

On Wednesday, Mr. Trump summarily overruled Mr. Bolton and the rest of his national security team with his abrupt and dangerous troop withdrawal decision. The move, detached from any broader strategic context or any public rationale, sowed new uncertainty about America's commitment to the Middle East, its willingness to be a global leader and Mr. Trump's role as commander in chief.

It appears to have been the final straw for Mr. Mattis, who has walked a tightrope for the past two years between his training and his conscience, and the whims of his president. He kept his concerns mainly to himself, while slow-walking a number of Mr. Trump's demands, like banning transgender troops and seeking a full-dress military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, said in a tweet that Mr. Mattis's departure was "scary." He called him "an island of stability amidst the chaos of the Trump administration."

Soldiers have a duty to follow their leader and carry out lawful orders. But success depends on trusting that the leader knows what he's doing and where he's going.

Sending conflicting orders to soldiers on the battlefield, as Mr. Trump and his admin-

istration are doing, not only hampers morale and undermines allied forces like the Syrian Kurds, it could also risk getting American soldiers killed or wounded for objectives their commanders had already abandoned.

Even some of Mr. Trump's most ardent supporters were alarmed. "It is a major blunder," a Republican senator, Marco Rubio of Florida, wrote on Twitter. "If it isn't reversed it will haunt this administration & America for years to come."

Senator Lindsey Graham, Republican of South Carolina, who generally supports Mr. Trump, said he and others in the national security establishment were "blindsided" by the announcement. He called for congressional hearings on the decision.

This isn't the first time the president and his administration have sent mixed messages. During the 2016 campaign, Mr. Trump promised to withdraw troops from Syria and has been looking for a way to do it ever since. In April, he gave the Pentagon more time to complete the mission, which since the Obama era has been strictly focused on finishing off the Islamic State. Then Mr. Bolton arrived on the job and declared that "we're not going to leave as long as Iranian troops are outside Iranian borders, and that includes Iranian proxies and militias."

As late as Monday, James Jeffrey, the State Department's Syria envoy, told the Atlantic Council that the United States would stay in Syria until ISIS was defeated, Iranian influence was curbed and there was a political solution to the Syrian civil war.

But on Wednesday, Mr. Trump undercut his advisers, and American interests, by reversing course and declaring in a tweet, "We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency."

There was no attempt to use the leverage of an American withdrawal to achieve any specific political or military goal.

Mr. Trump's assertion that the Islamic State is defeated is absurd. "We have won against ISIS," he boasted in a video. The ability of the terrorists to strike has been significantly degraded and much of the territory they claimed for their so-called caliphate has been liberated. But the group still retains a pocket of land on the Syria-Iraq border and has roughly 20,000 to 30,000 fighters, according to military researchers. As Mr. Jeffrey said Monday, "The job is not yet done."

No one wants American troops deployed in a war zone longer than necessary. But there is no indication that Mr. Trump has thought through the consequences of a precipitous withdrawal, including allowing ISIS forces to regroup and create another crisis that would draw the United States back into the region.

An American withdrawal would also be a gift to Vladimir Putin, the Russian leader, who has been working hard to supplant American influence in the region and who, on Thursday, enthusiastically welcomed the decision, saying, "Donald's right." Another beneficiary is Iran, which has also expanded its regional footprint. It would certainly make it harder for the Trump administration to implement its policy of ratcheting up what it calls "maximum pressure" on Iran.

Among the biggest losers are likely to be the Kurdish troops that the United States has equipped and relied on to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, considers many of the Kurds to be terrorists bent on destroying his country. In recent days he has vowed to launch a new offensive against them in the Syrian border region. Mr. Trump discussed his withdrawal decision in a telephone call with Mr. Erdogan on Friday.

The American withdrawal worries Israel, anxious about Iran's robust military presence in Syria, and Jordan, which bears a considerable burden from Syrian refugees who fled the fighting across the border. While Israel withheld criticism of Mr. Trump's decision, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government would escalate the fight against Iranian-aligned forces in Syria once the Americans leave.

Decisions of such consequence normally are thoroughly vetted by a president's national security advisers. But congressional lawmakers said there were no signs that any process was followed, and a senior White House official, refusing to discuss internal deliberations, said Wednesday, "The issue here is the president made a decision."

Judging from the timing and tone of Mr. Mattis' letter of resignation, the president made that decision alone.

#### TRIBUTE TO JAMES MATTIS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, like so many Republicans and Democrats, I was stunned to hear that Secretary Mattis was going to be leaving.

I understand his reasons. He has said he always felt a duty to uphold the interests and security of the United States and to uphold our agreements with other countries for the security of democracy. The President has disagreed with him on that. He feels otherwise. So Secretary Mattis feels the President should be entitled to have somebody who takes differing views.

Unfortunately, General Mattis's views are those that are the result of decades of service to this country as a marine in combat, as a marine commander, as a four-star general, and as one who has the strong respect of Republicans and Democrats alike. Certainly, he has the strong respect of those who have served in the military and who know what it means to actually stand up for this country, not just in rhetoric but by putting their lives on the line on the battlefield.

I will always admire General Mattis. I applaud his service to the United States of America, and I know he is a man who can leave with his head held high.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### FLATSIDE WILDERNESS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Agriculture Committee be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5636.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5636) to designate additions to the Flatside Wilderness on the Ouachita National Forest, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 5636) was passed.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REAUTHORIZING THE NEW JERSEY COASTAL HERITAGE TRAIL ROUTE

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6602.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6602) to reauthorize the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 6602) was passed.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, here we are at approximately 2:30 on a Saturday afternoon trying to do the people's business in a situation that nobody wanted. Yet because, I believe, of political self-interest, we are in a situation right now where we are in what I would call a crisis mode of operation.

We need to get a deal done. But I want to address a couple of topics today that are at issue here as we debate the funding issue, which is at the crux of why we are here today and this weekend.

Our country was built on immigration; there is just no question that we are all direct derivatives, in one way or the other. But I would like to be very clear that most of the people who have come to this country over the last two centuries came in legally. Today, we bring in 1.1 million people a year—legally. We bring in about 70,000 people who have a job-related way to get into our system. There are about 70,000 direct family members; that is, a spouse and immediate children. There are another 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers. There is a rational reason we should do that, and we have been doing that.

Today, every day, asylum seekers and refugees are permitted into our country, but there are another 800,000 who come in legally every year, and the only reason they come in is that they have an indirect family link, through generations, to the 70,000 that come in. Given that environment, we also have a temporary work permit system here that, again, has over 1 million people in it—every year.

Our country is the most welcoming, philanthropic country in the history of the world. To think that just protecting our borders as a national security issue is somehow hard-hearted and radical—no country in the history of the world has ever demonstrated that it was a radical thought to maintain and protect the sovereignty of their own country and their own borders.

Indeed, there are only 6 reasons why 13 colonies came together in the first place in the late 18th century and formed the United States of America. The No. 1 reason articulated is to provide for the common defense of our country.

President Trump is leading right now in his first responsibility, and that is to protect every citizen of the United States of America. He is fighting for the American people. Actually, that is how he got elected. He got elected because he complained about the dysfunction in Washington, about politicians, bureaucrats, and the media. So did I, in 2014—2 years before President Trump did. I believe people are fed up with this dysfunction in Washington.

I want to reemphasize that what is at issue here is the protection of our sovereignty as a country—not to change the immigration laws; that is not what is at debate today.

I want to remind everybody that just in this body this year, 43 of my colleagues across the aisle, in an immigration bill proposed by SUSAN COLLINS on this side, 43 Democrats voted for a \$25 billion border security package—43. I think President Trump has demonstrated tremendous negotiating willingness over and over, over this past year, on this issue.